

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 234482 TOSEC 270516

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ARA-LUERS, ACTING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, PINS, CI

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: AMBASSADOR TRUCCO AND
ORLANDO LETELIER

1. CHILEAN AMBASSADOR MANUEL TRUCCO CALLED ON ME AT 5:00 P.M. SEPTEMBER 21. TRUCCO SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH HIS FOREIGN MINISTER, CARVAJAL, AND WAS INSTRUCTED TO EXPRESS HIS GOVERNMENT'S "REPLUSION FOR THIS GHASTLY OUTRAGEOUS ACT." ON BEHALF OF THE GOC HE ASKED FOR A COMPLETE INVESTIGATION. HE OFFERED TO PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION NEEDED TO THROW LIGHT ON "THIS ACT OF TERRORISM". HE ALSO ASKED THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAKE NO STATEMENTS WHICH WOULD CAST DOUBT "ON ANYBODY".

2. HE STATED THAT POLITICAL ASSASSINATION WAS, IN THE PAST, SOMETHING ALIEN TO CHILE. BETWEEN 1837 AND 1970 THERE WAS ONLY ONE POLITICAL ASSASSINATION IN CHILE. SINCE 1970 THERE ARE BEEN OVER 150. HE THEN GAVE ME A FIRST PERSON NOTE: BEGIN QUOTE "EXCELLENCY:

IN VIEW OF THE DEPLORABLE INCIDENT, WHICH TODAY TOOK THE
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LIVES OF A FORMER AMBASSADOR OF CHILE TO THE UNITED STATES

AND ONE OF HIS CO-WORKERS, I HAVE THE HONOR TO EXPRESS TO

YOUR EXCELLENCY, IN THE NAME OF MY GOVERNMENT, THE MOST COMPLETE REPUDIATION OF SUCH A CONDEMNABLE ACTION.

I RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT ORDER A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THIS TERRORIST ACT SO THAT ALL FACETS AND CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO IT ARE CLARIFIED AND RESULT IN THE DETENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE GUILTY PARTIES.

PLEASE ACCEPT THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST AND MOST DISTINGUISHED CONSIDERATION.

SIGNED MANUEL TRUCCO, AMBASSADOR" END QUOTE.

3. I THANKED TRUCCO FOR THE NOTE AND HIS EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN. I SAID THAT WE WERE REQUESTING A FULL FBI INVESTIGATION. I ASSURED TRUCCO THAT WE WOULD BE VERY CAREFUL IN OUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO STICK TO THE FACTS. WHILE WE DEPLORE IRRESPONSIBLE STATEMENTS AND ALLEGATIONS AND RECOGNIZE THAT THEY CREATE SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR THE CHILEAN EMBASSY, WE HAVE VERY LITTLE CONTROL OVER PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. I SAID THAT WHATEVER LETELIER'S POLITICAL VIEWS, HE WAS A MAN WHO HAD BECOME A POPULAR FIGURE IN WASHINGTON. I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE EVENTUAL CONSEQUENCES OF THIS MURDER FOR CHILE. I ALSO SUGGESTED TO TRUCCO THAT HE BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE IN HIS CONTACTS WITH THE PRESS.

4. TRUCCO SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN INTERVIEWED BY SEVERAL TV STATIONS FOR THE EVENING NEWS. HE DID NOT SAY IT TO THE TV INTERVIEWERS, BUT HE ASKED HIMSELF WHEN A GOVERNMENT STRIPS A MAN OF HIS NATIONALITY WOULD IT ALSO STRIP HIM OF HIS LIFE? (REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT HAD REVOKED LETELIER'S CITIZENSHIP SEPTEMBER 10.) HE SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE STOOD TO LOSE THE MOST BY HIS MURDER. IT JUST DID NOT MAKE SENSE TO ACCUSE THE GOC.

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5. TRUCCO CLAIMED THAT LETELIER HAD FAILED IN HIS MISSION HERE. HE WAS, "NO WORRY TO ME". HE WAS ON "AN ISLAND OF MARXISM; AN ISLAND THAT HAS NO IMPACT IN THE U.S." THE ONLY PEOPLE TO LOSE IN THIS SITUATION WOULD BE OURSELVES."

6. I TOLD TRUCCO THAT WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO PASS TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES ANY INFORMATION HIS GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE WHICH MIGHT HELP IN THE INVESTIGATION. ROBINSON

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